

Old Testament Theology
OT 3480
Pacific School of Religion
July 6-17, 2009
Monday through Friday, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Instructor: Jon L. Berquist
502-322-7984
jberquist@aol.com

Goals:

Old Testament Theology attempts to locate key understandings of God and God's activity throughout a variety of Old Testament texts. The literary descriptions of God, the actions attributed to God, and the practices of God's followers and worshippers are thus prime data for this endeavor. There is also a synthetic component to Old Testament Theology, which attempts to correlate the various data into coherent overviews. Furthermore, the practice of Old Testament Theology can provide the conditions for dialogue between biblical studies and constructive or systematic theology. This course will explore methods and themes for Old Testament Theology, and discuss ways to appropriate theological insights for understanding biblical texts, religious discourse, and the life of faith. Prerequisite: Introduction to Old Testament. (3 credit course)

Objectives:

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Understand methods and problems in the history of biblical theology.
- Identify and critique several major theological positions about the Old Testament.
- Explain several theological themes of the Old Testament.
- Describe contemporary ethical implications of Old Testament theological concepts.
- Bring Old Testament texts and concepts into productive dialogue with constructive and systematic theology.
- Design strategies for communicating Old Testament theology to religious communities today.

Textbooks:

REQUIRED:

The Bible in a New Revised Standard Version translation (or similar).

James K. Mead, *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods and Themes* (WJK 2007).

Gail R. O'Day and David L. Petersen, eds., *Theological Bible Commentary* (WJK 2009).

Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Fortress 1995).

RECOMMENDED:

Jon L. Berquist, *Incarnation* (Chalice 2000).

Julia M. O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* (WJK 2008).

Assignments:

General Comments: Standard policies of Pacific School of Religion are binding for this course. The schedule is tentative and the instructor reserves the right to change the schedule. The instructor reserves the right to not accept late papers without prior approval.

1. Reading and Course Participation. Each participant must complete all of the general reading assignments, including the reading of the biblical texts for each class session, and must demonstrate this through participating in class discussions. Also, each student will give the professor a one-page reflection paper on one of the assigned readings at the start of five class sessions. Inadequate attendance and participation will result in grade reduction. 40% of final grade.

2. Paper on a Theme in Old Testament Theology. Select a significant theme in Old Testament theology. This may be one of the themes discussed in class or another important theme. Write an eight-page paper that explores and provides a critical overview of this theme, with explicit reference to the most relevant Old Testament passages with exegetical detail. There should be reference to how this theme interacts with other themes within the Old Testament and/or similar themes in other religious, theological, or philosophical traditions. The paper should demonstrate thorough understanding of the course's assigned readings and the relationships between them. The paper should include full scholarly documentation and adhere to standard style, such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. This paper is due on July 17 at the beginning of class and will be worth 30% of final course grade.

3. Integrative Assignment. The final requirement is an eight-page paper dealing with one or more of the theological issues of the Old Testament and relating them either (a) to ministry in religious communities today or (b) to wider theological discourse. Option (a) requires concentration on specific plans and relevant strategies for integrating the texts and concepts of Old Testament theology with the realities of present ministry and/or religious life. Option (b) requires sustained and critical reflection on one or more specific theological sources. The paper should include full scholarly documentation and adhere to standard style, such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. Each student must email this paper to the professor. This paper is due at noon on July 24. The paper is 30% of the final grade.

NOTE: Assignments #2 and #3 may be combined into a single 16-page paper that includes a specific theme of Old Testament theology and connects that theme to either ministry or theology. Such a combined paper would need to meet all requirements and

objectives of the two individual assignments. This paper would be due July 24 at noon via email, and would be worth 60% of the course grade.

Class Schedule:

The class meets Monday through Friday afternoons, 1:00-5:00 pm.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Monday, July 6 | Introduction to class.
Overview of Old Testament Theology.
Methods of Old Testament Theology. |
| Tuesday, July 7 | Descriptions of God.
READ: Genesis 1-3. Exodus 34. 1 Kings 22. Proverbs 8.
Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. Mead, 1-59. Weems, 1-11, 68-83. |
| Wednesday, July 8 | Sin, Evil, Theodicy, Punishment.
READ: Genesis. Judges. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen.
Mead, 61-120. |
| Thursday, July 9 | Covenant, Providence, Promise, Dominion.
READ: Exodus. Samuel. Kings. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. Mead, 169-239. |
| Friday, July 10 | Redemption, Salvation.
READ: Isaiah. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. Mead, 121-167. |
| Monday, July 13 | Ethics, Law, Wisdom.
READ: Deuteronomy. Proverbs. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. |
| Tuesday, July 14 | Liberation, Justice, Abuse.
READ: Jeremiah. Ezekiel. Hosea. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. Weems, 12-67, 84-119. |
| Wednesday, July 15 | Atonement, Priesthood, Worship.
READ: Leviticus. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. |
| Thursday, July 16 | Holiness, Mission, Pluralism.
READ: Isaiah 1-2, 40-55. Ruth. Esther. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. Mead, 241-247, 301-342. |
| Friday, July 17 | Eschatology, Future, and the Day of the Lord.
READ: Amos. Daniel. Relevant parts of O'Day & Petersen. |

